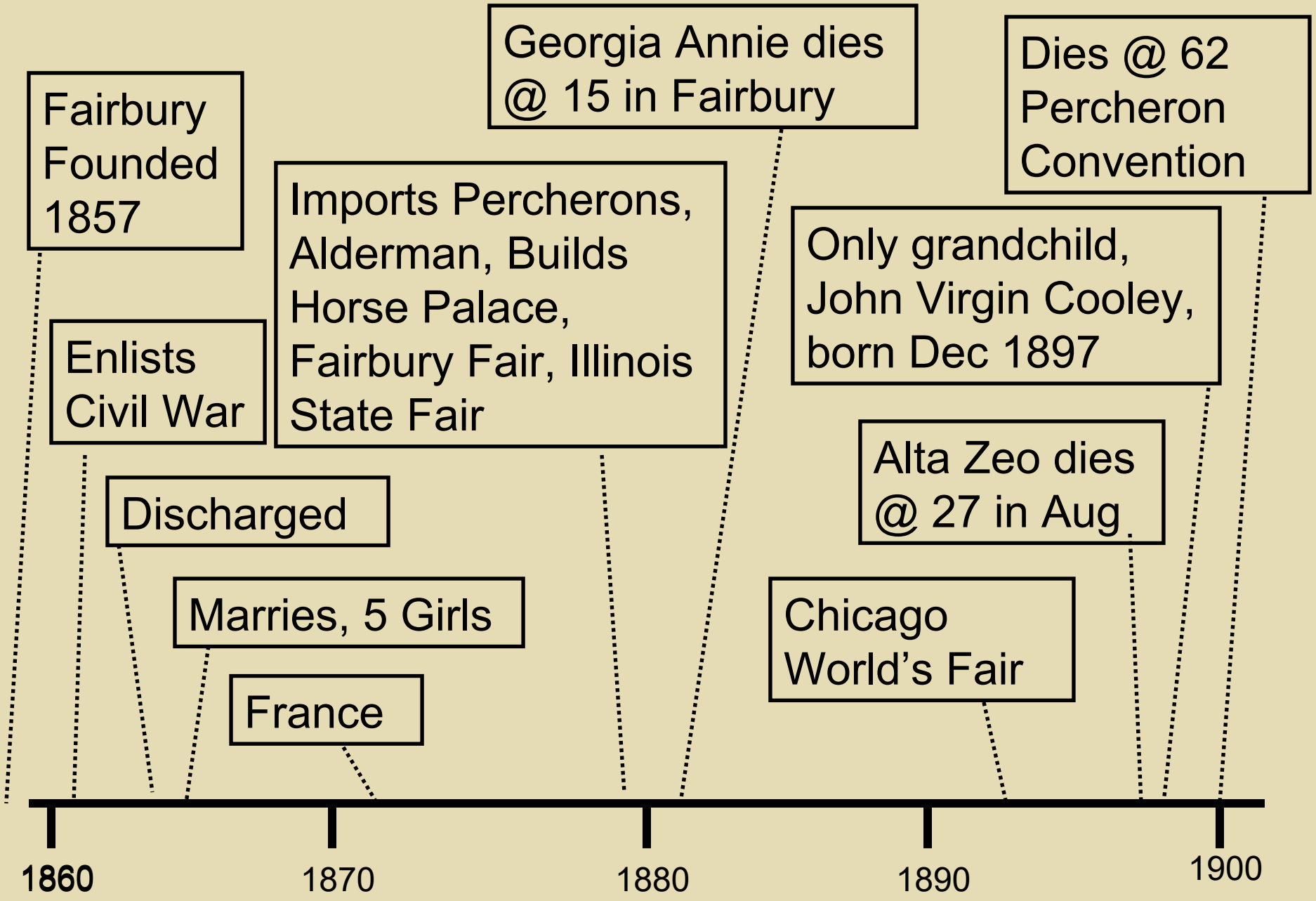
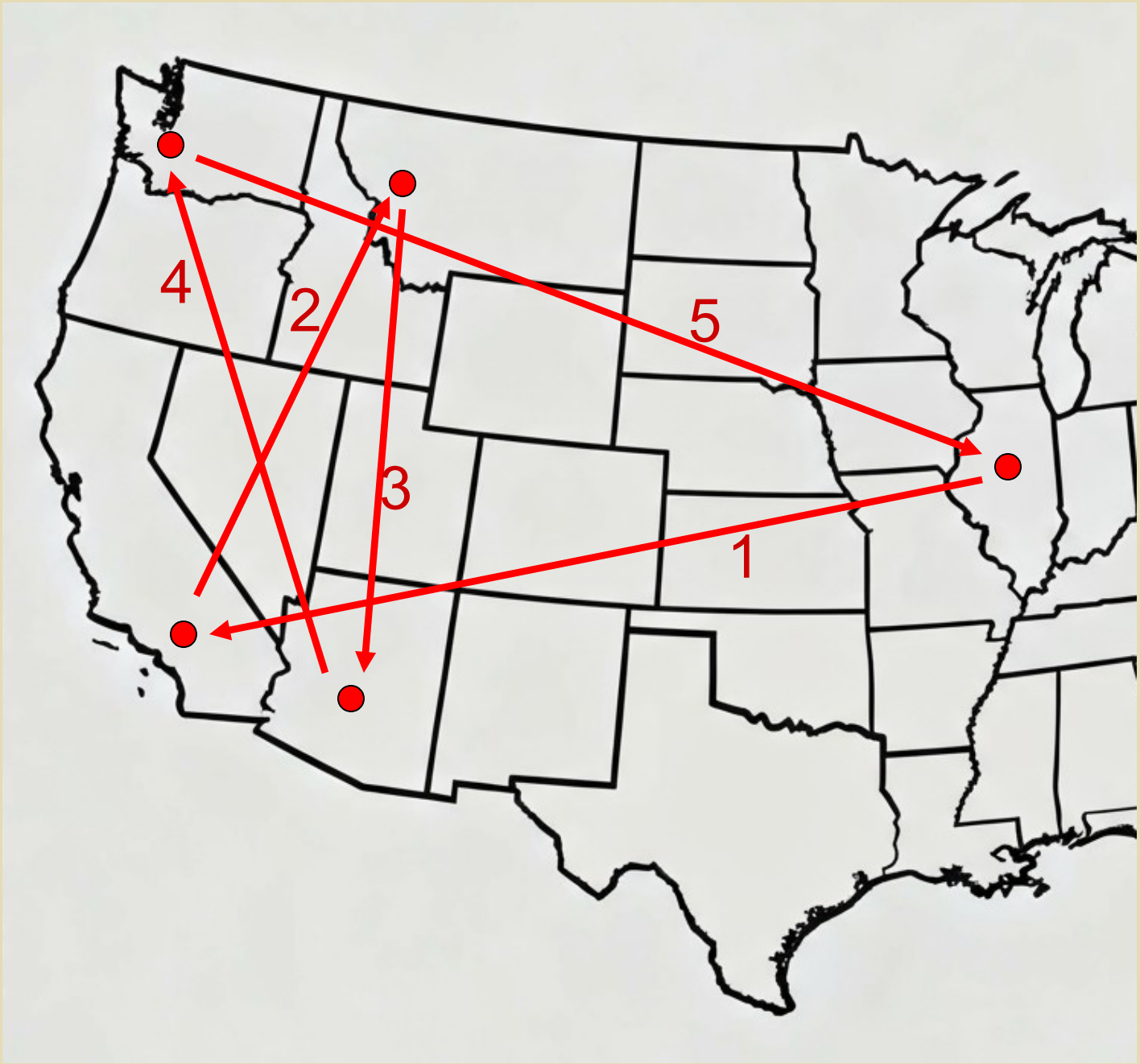
John Virgin (1838-1900)

Fairbury, Illinois

By: Dale C. Maley


Fairbury Founded 1857
Enlists Civil War
Discharged
Marries, 5 Girls
France
Imports Percherons, Alderman, Builds Horse Palace, Fairbury Fair, Illinois State Fair
Georgia Annie dies @ 15 in Fairbury
Only grandchild, John Virgin Cooley, born Dec 1897
Alta Zeo dies @ 27 in Aug
Chicago World's Fair
Dies @ 62 Percheron Convention
1860
1870
1880
1890
1900



•1907 to 2025 Journey of Box of John Virgin family history items

Rare Items Found in the Box

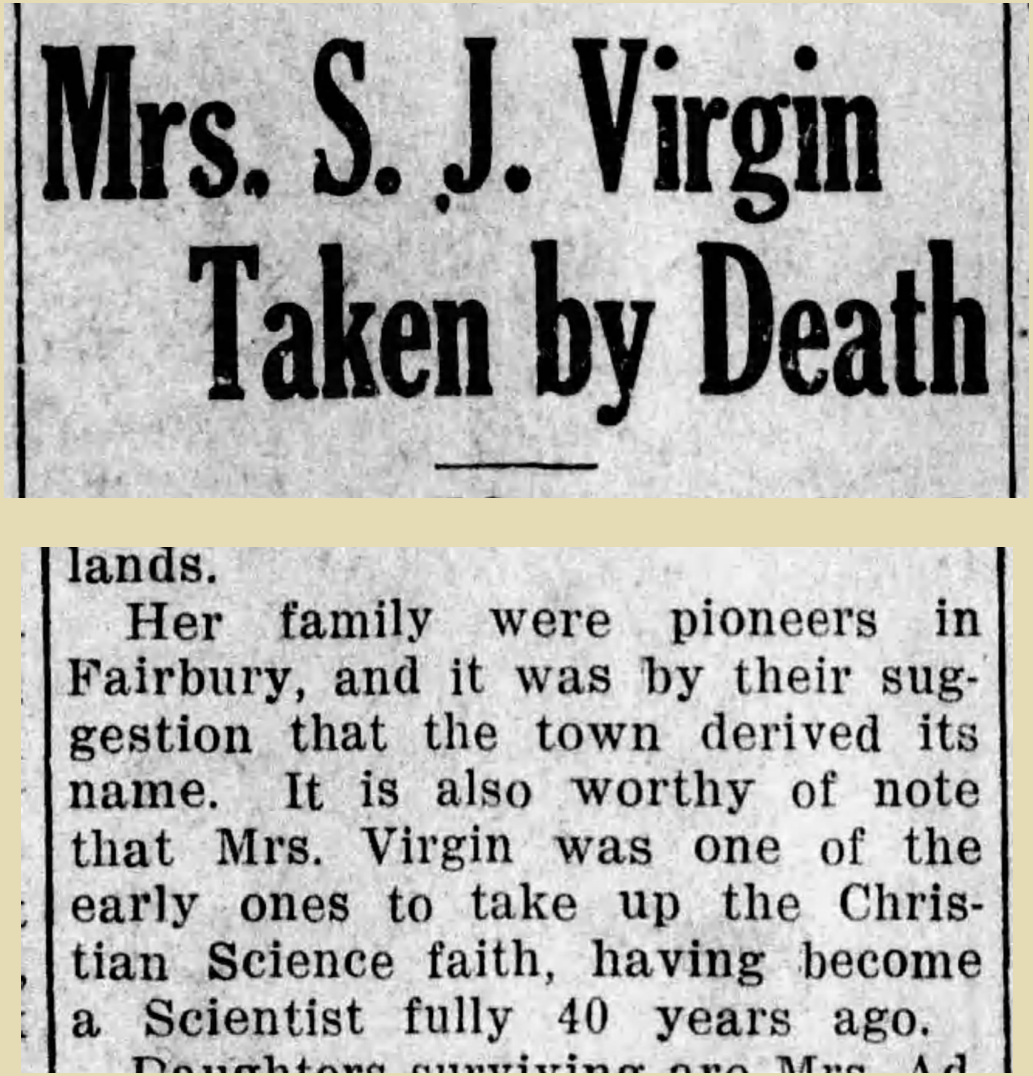
QUESTION: Who came up with the original town name of Fairbury?

ANSWER: Nobody knows!

Alma Lewis James => Octave Chanute suggested Pattonville, but Patton thought it was not a good idea since at least 3 farmers unhappy the tracks did not go through their farm.

New Theory

Rare Items Found in the Box



Mrs. S. J. Virgin
Taken by Death

lands.

Her family were pioneers in Fairbury, and it was by their suggestion that the town derived its name. It is also worthy of note that Mrs. Virgin was one of the early ones to take up the Christian Science faith, having become a Scientist fully 40 years ago.

1935 Obit for John Virgin's wife in CA

Very possibly true !!

McDowells were here in 1832, and she or her parents could have suggested the name.

Rare Items Found in the Box

- Marriage or Wedding Certificates very rare before Civil War
- John Virgin's daughter married Hal Smith
- Hal Smith's 1865 Marriage Certificate found

Rare Items Found in the Box

MARRIAGE LICENSE.

STATE OF OHIO, ASHLAND COUNTY,

To Any Person Authorized to Solemnize Marriages IN SAID COUNTY:

You are Hereby Authorized to Solemnize the Marriage Contract between

Mr. Zerah O Smith

AND

Miss Melissa Burns

In Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the Probate Court of said County, this twentyseventh day of April in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty-five

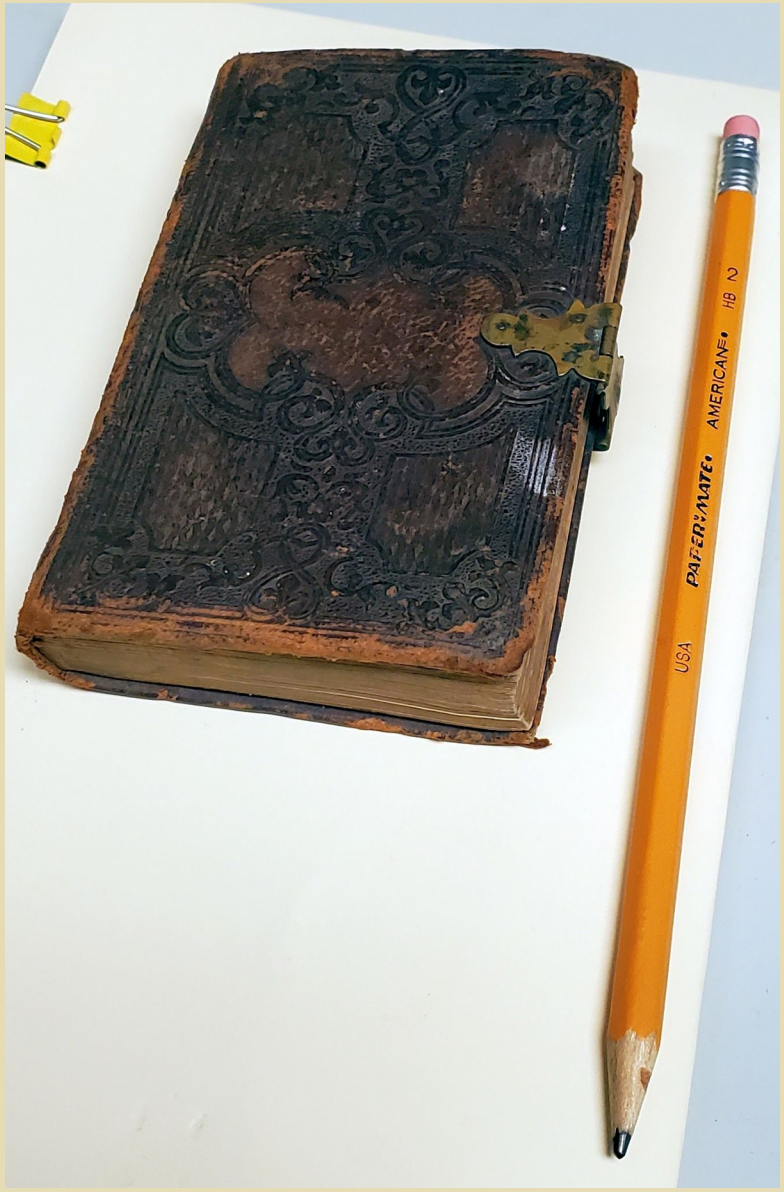
E Sugmand Probate Judge.

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

This is to Certify, That by authority of a License under the Seal of the Probate Court of said County, Mr. Zerah O. Smith and Miss Melissa Burns were, by me, on the fourth day of May in the year of our Lord, Eighteen Hundred and Sixty-five legally united as HUSBAND AND WIFE.

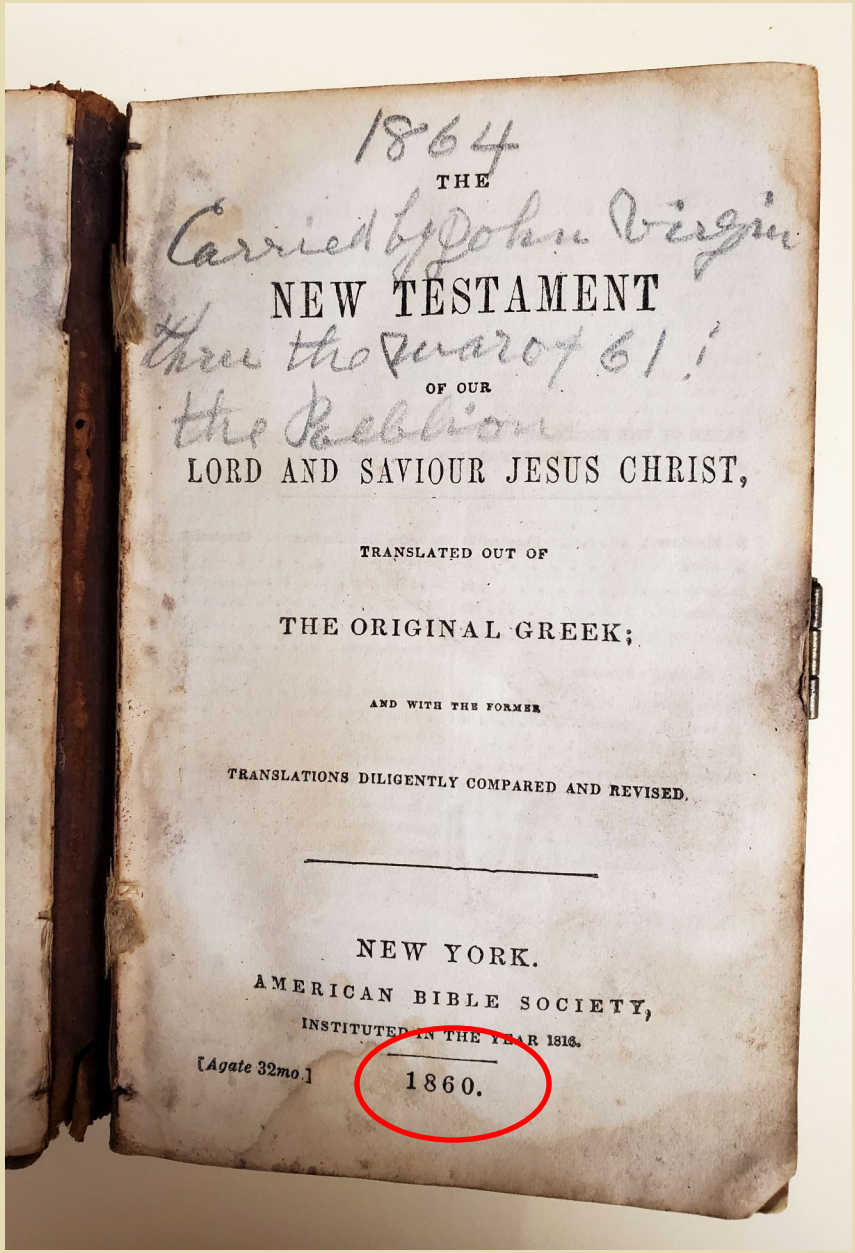
L. R. Norton Minister.

Rare Items Found in the Box



- Many soldiers carried a small Bible with them in the Civil War
- John Virgin's bible a little bigger size than most
- In very good shape for an 1860 Bible!

Rare Items Found in the Box



"1864 – Carried by John Virgin thru the War of 61: The Rebellion"

Rare Items Found in the Box

If any man should find this book, please send it to her, Y. P. Virgin, Pontiac, Livingston County, Illinois.

The property of John Virgin, a volunteer in the service of the United States at Fairbury, IL.

August 20, 1861

MYSTERY?

He was not married until 1865, his mother was Lucinda Virgin

Not sure who Y. P. Virgin was??

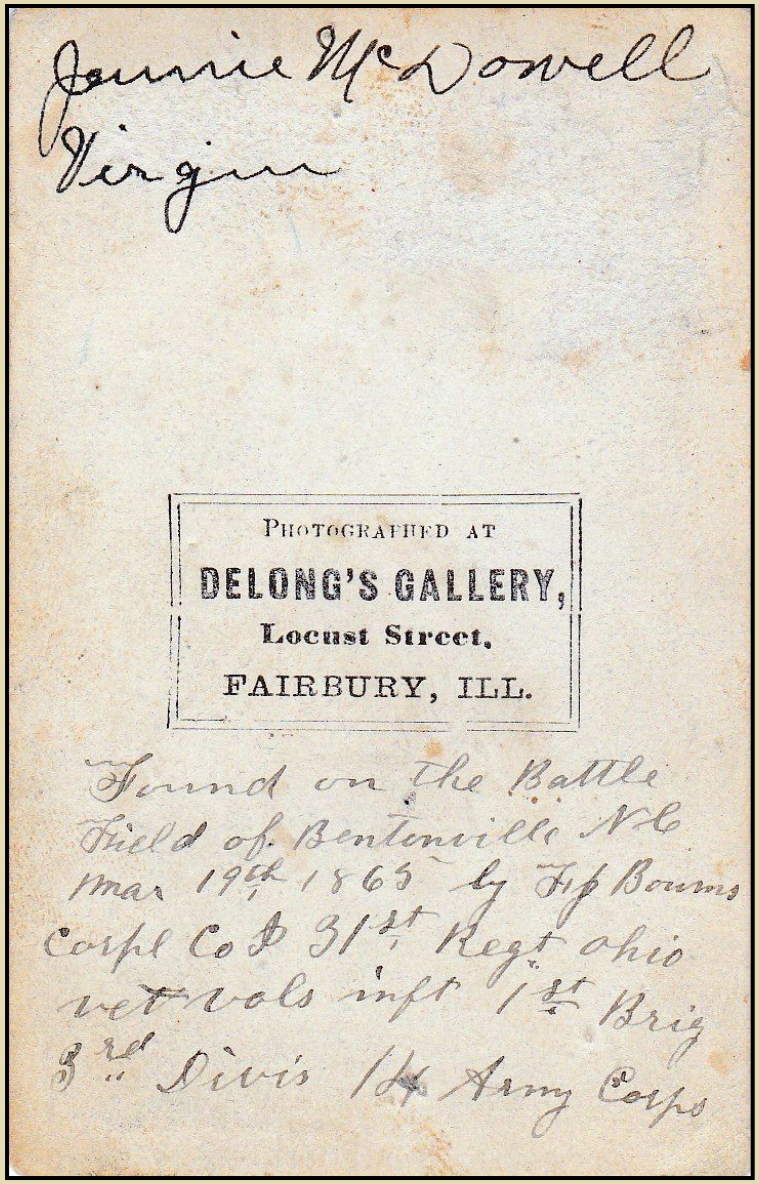
Rare Items Found in the Box

- In addition to a Bible, many soldiers carried a small photo of their wife or sweetheart.

- John Virgin carried a photo of Serepta Jane “Jennie” McDowell during the war……..

…….but he accidentally dropped it on the Battlefield !!

Rare Items Found in the Box



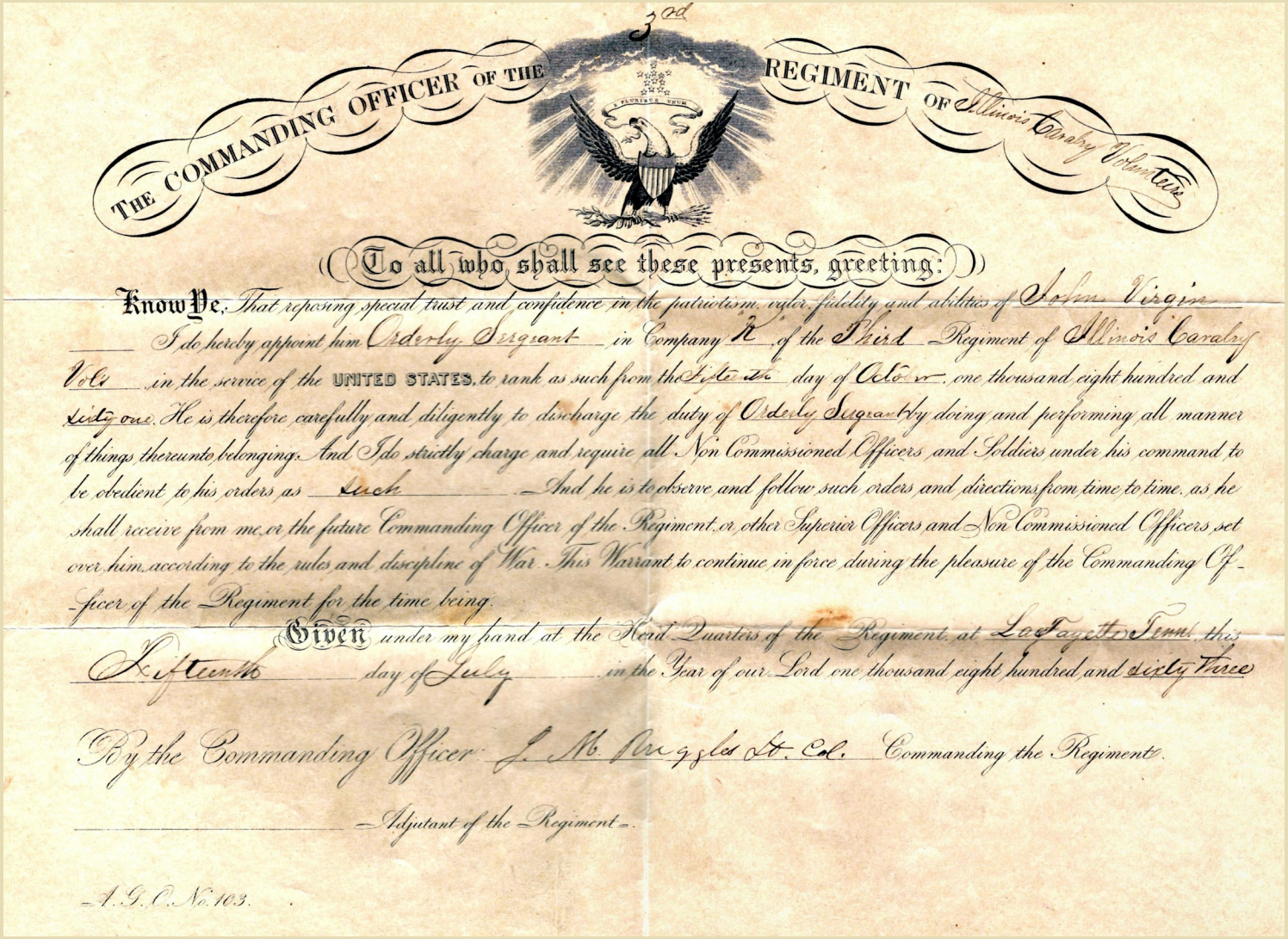
Likely traced to Delong's shop

Rare Items Found in the Box

Circa 1865 Colorized by Fotor.com

Rare Items Found in the Box

Rare Items Found in the Box



THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE 3rd REGIMENT OF Illinois Cavalry Volunteers

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know Ye, That reposing special trust and confidence in the patriotism, valor, fidelity and abilities of John Virgin I do hereby appoint him Orderly Sergeant in Company K of the Third Regiment of Illinois Cavalry Vols in the service of the UNITED STATES, to rank as such from the Fifteenth day of October one thousand eight hundred and sixty one. He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Orderly Sergeant by doing and performing all manner of things thereunto belonging. And I do strictly charge and require all Non Commissioned Officers and Soldiers under his command to be obedient to his orders as such And he is to observe and follow such orders and directions from time to time, as he shall receive from me, or the future Commanding Officer of the Regiment, or other Superior Officers and Non Commissioned Officers set over him according to the rules and discipline of War. This Warrant to continue in force during the pleasure of the Commanding Officer of the Regiment for the time being.

Given under my hand at the Head Quarters of the Regiment, at LaFayette Tenn. this Fifteenth day of July in the Year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty Three

By the Commanding Officer L. M. Douglas Lt. Col. Commanding the Regiment.

Adjutant of the Regiment.

A. G. O. No. 103.

John Virgin promoted to “Orderly Sergeant” in 1863

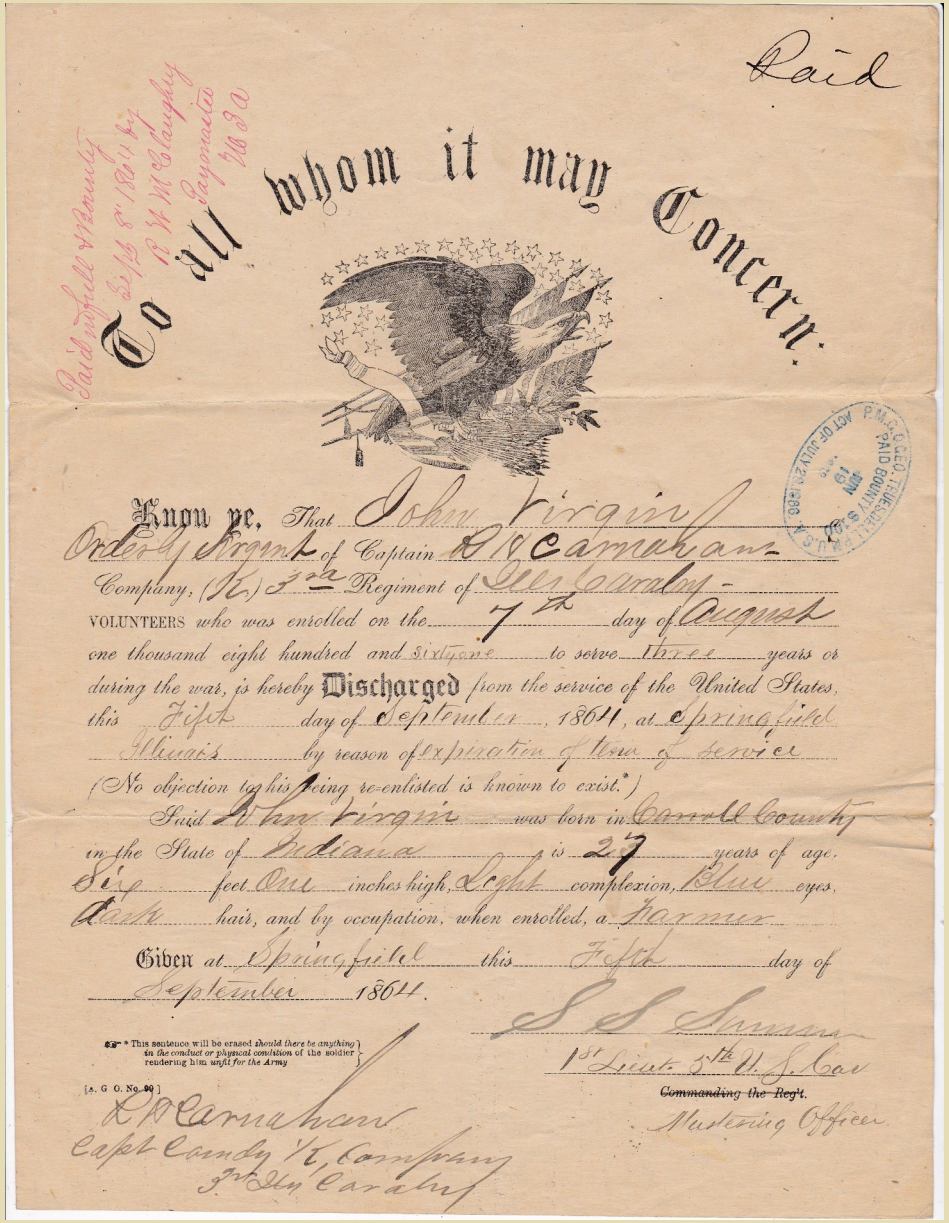
Rare Items Found in the Box

- An "orderly sergeant" during the Civil War was the same as the First Sergeant of a company.

- The orderly sergeant was the senior non-commissioned officer responsible for the company's administrative duties—keeping roll books, recording daily orders, reporting the company’s status, overseeing discipline, preparing reports, and relaying orders from the officers to enlisted men.

- In battle, the orderly/first sergeant helped form the battle line, kept the ranks straight, and sometimes assumed command if officers were killed or incapacitated.

Rare Items Found in the Box



Paid

To all whom it may Concern.

Know ye, That John Virgin
Orderly Sergt of Captain D. D. Carnahan
Company, (K) 3rd Regiment of Ill. Cavalry
VOLUNTEERS who was enrolled on the 7th day of August
one thousand eight hundred and Sixty one to serve three years or
during the war, is hereby **Discharged** from the service of the United States,
this Fifth day of September, 1864, at Springfield
Illinois by reason of Expiration of Term of Service
(No objection to his being re-enlisted is known to exist.*)
Said John Virgin was born in Carroll County
in the State of Indiana is 27 years of age,
Six feet One inches high, Light complexion, Blue eyes,
Dark hair, and by occupation, when enrolled, a Farmer
Given at Springfield this Fifth day of
September 1864.

S S Sumner
1st Lieut 3rd U. S. Cav
Commanding the Reg't.
Mustering Officer

* This sentence will be erased should there be anything in the conduct or physical condition of the soldier rendering him unfit for the Army

[S. G. O. No. 99]

D D Carnahan
Capt Comdy K, Company
3rd Ill Cavalry

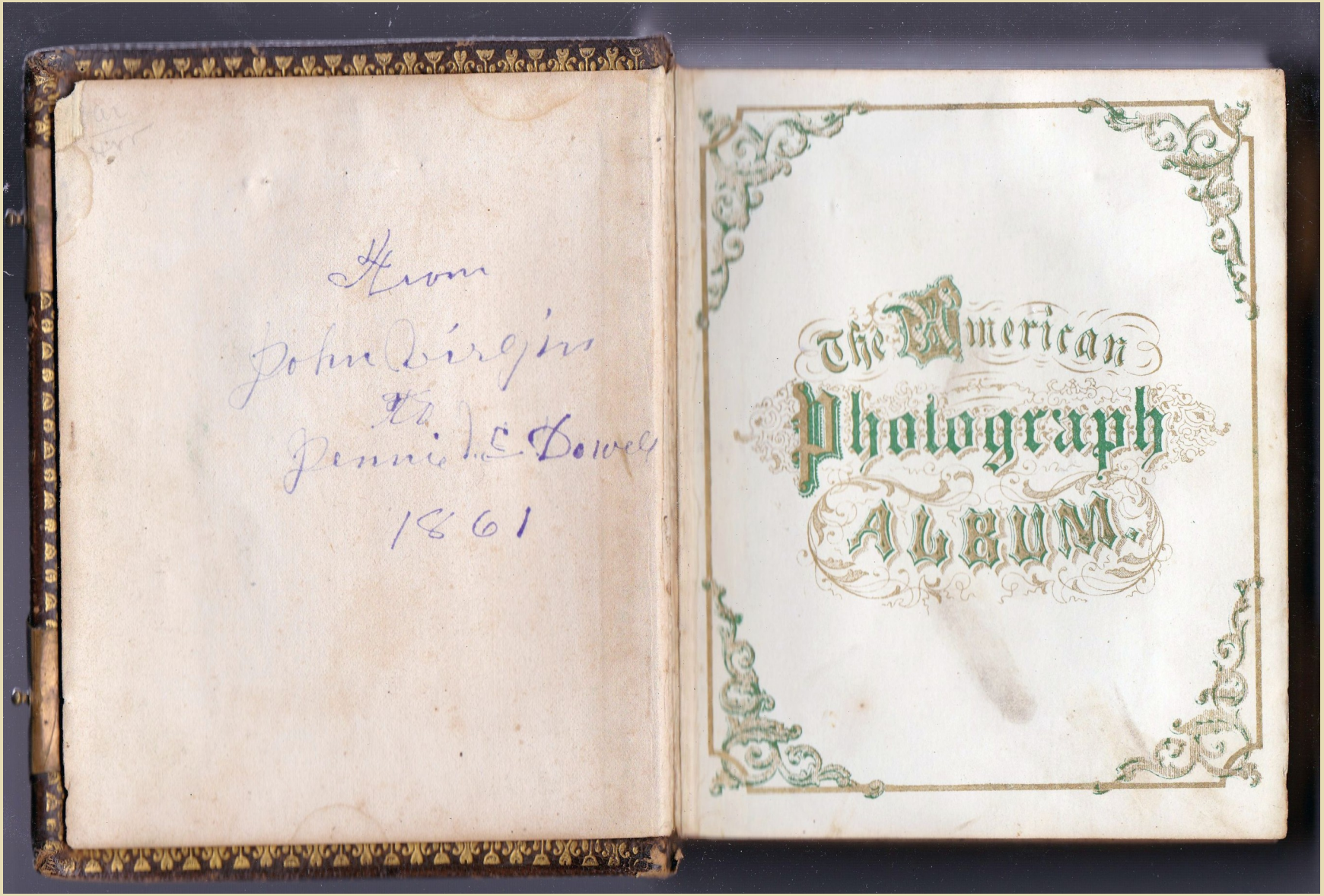
- John Virgin discharged in 1864 after his enlistment ended

- August 1861 to September 1864 or 3 years

Rare Items Found in the Box

- John Virgin gave his wife this photo scrapbook in 1861
- Very good condition
- About 50 photos from 1860s to 1900

Rare Items Found in the Box



Gave it to her before he left for Civil War

Rare Items Found in the Box

Family Photo

Circa 1884

3 Surviving daughters

Rare Items Found in the Box

Rare Items Found in the Box

Minnie, Alta Zeo, Georgia (died at 15)

Rare Items Found in the Box

Business Card size – Poor quality

Rare Items Found in the Box

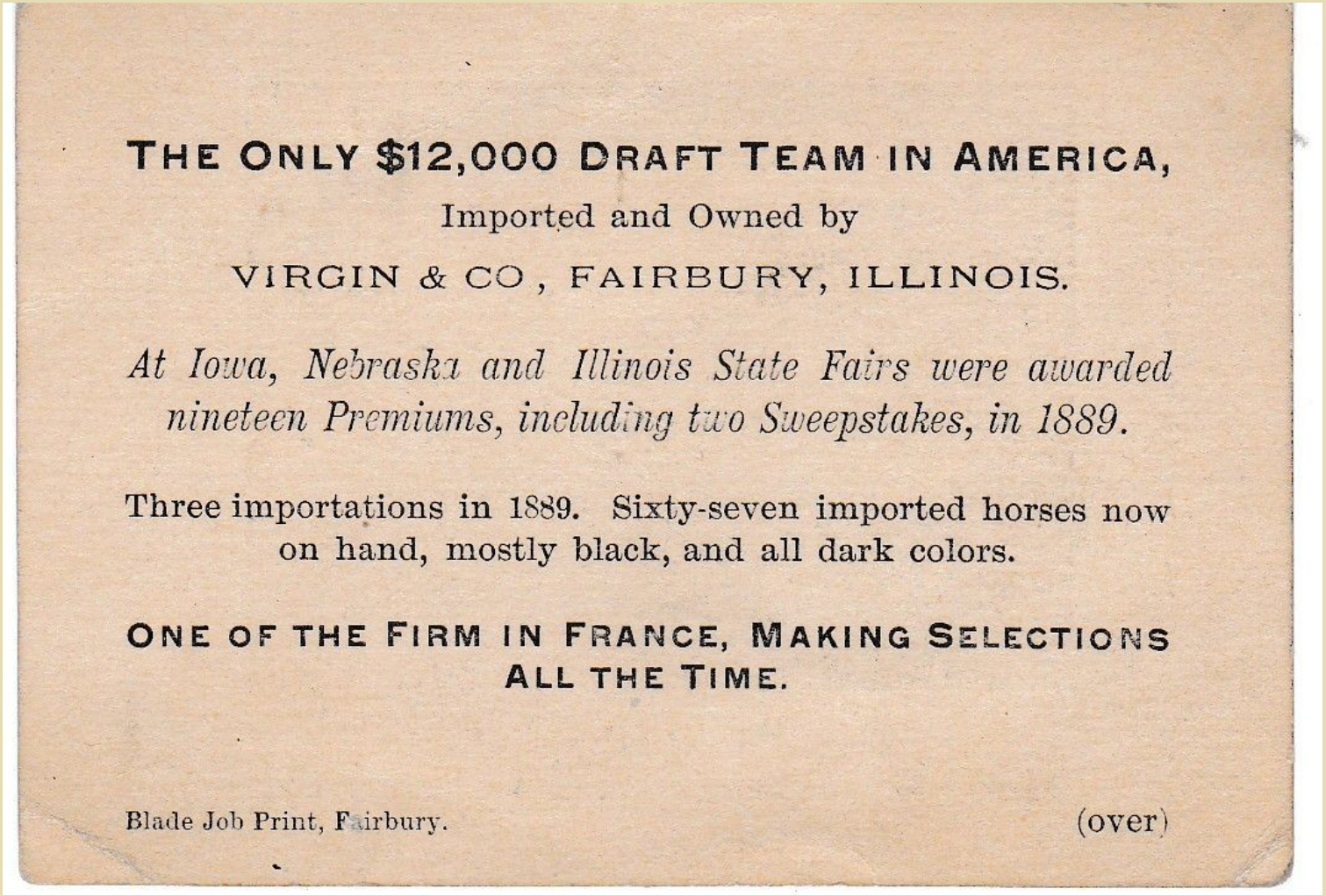
$12,000 DRAFT TEAM.

IMPORTED BY VIRGIN & CO., FAIRBURY, ILL.

(over)

Amazing !!

Rare Items Found in the Box



THE ONLY $12,000 DRAFT TEAM IN AMERICA,

Imported and Owned by

VIRGIN & CO, FAIRBURY, ILLINOIS.

At Iowa, Nebraska and Illinois State Fairs were awarded nineteen Premiums, including two Sweepstakes, in 1889.

Three importations in 1889. Sixty-seven imported horses now on hand, mostly black, and all dark colors.

ONE OF THE FIRM IN FRANCE, MAKING SELECTIONS ALL THE TIME.

Blade Job Print, Fairbury. (over)

$400,000 in today's dollars !!

Rare Items Found in the Box

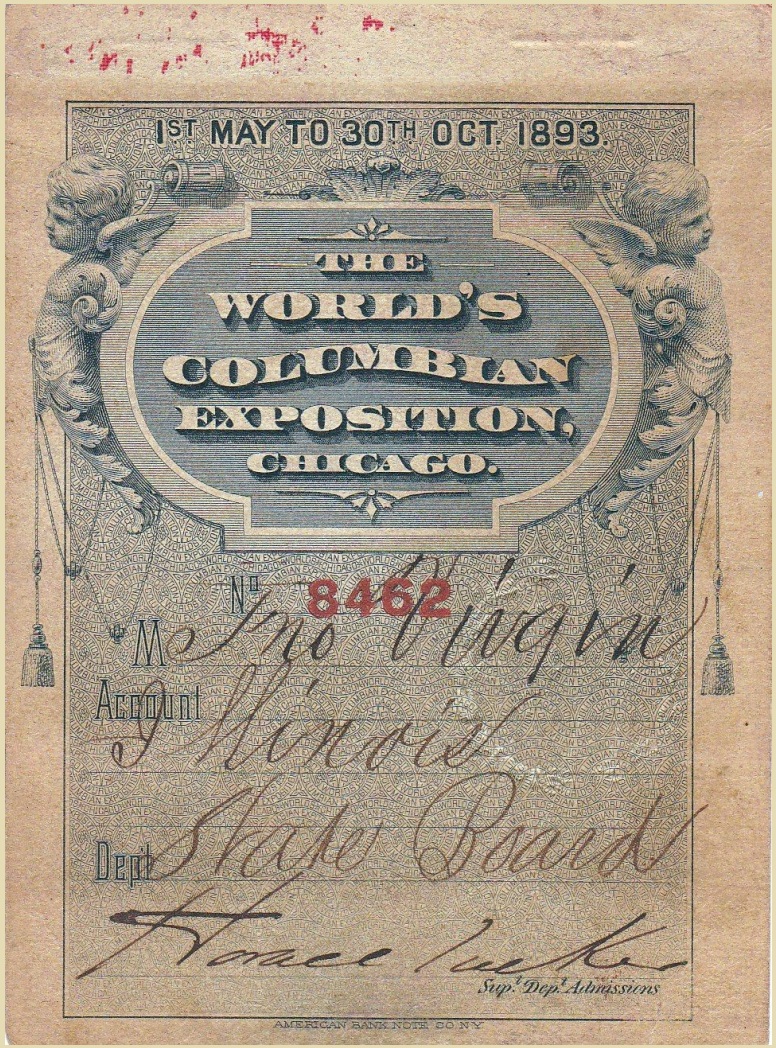
Minnie Virgin – Cooley
John Virgin Cooley's mother

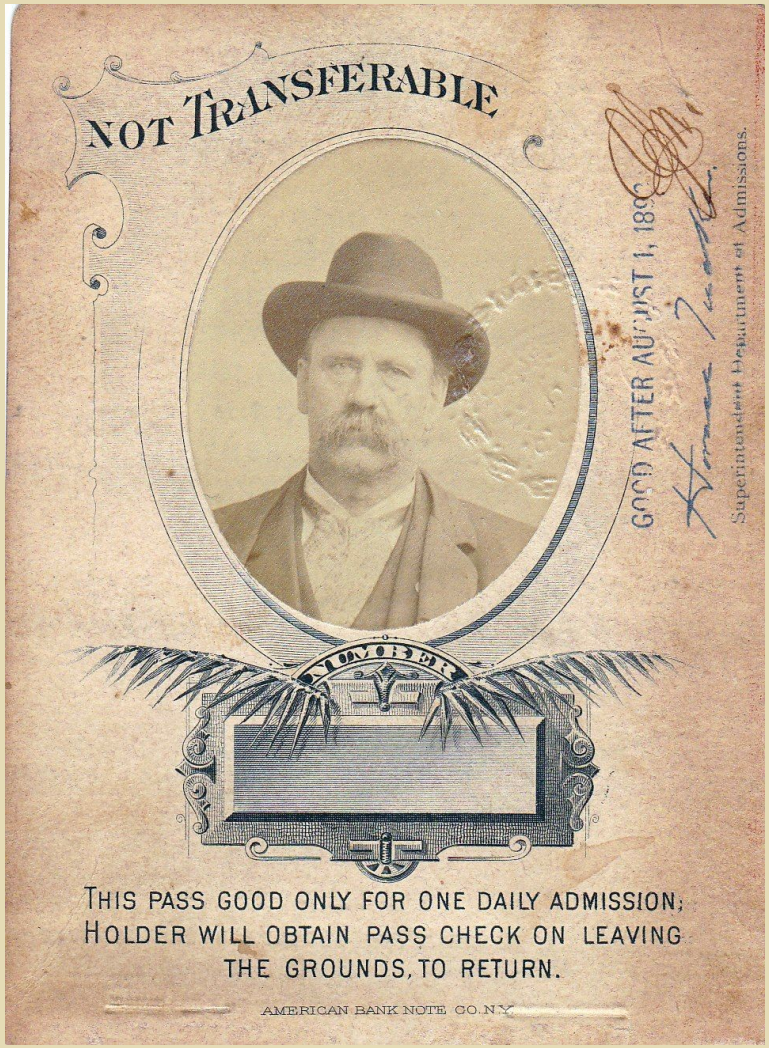
Rare Items Found in the Box

ANNUAL PASS
TOLEDO PEORIA & WESTERN
1892
Pass Mrs John Virgin
State Board of Agriculture
Good until December 31st 1892
UNLESS OTHERWISE ORDERED
No. 76
F. J. Lionard
MANAGER.
Toledo Peoria & Western
Railway. 1891
TOLEDO PEORIA & WESTERN
Pass Mrs John Virgin.
Between All Stations
Account State Board of Agr.
Oct 31 1891
No. 1083
GEN'L SUPT
This Pass is not transferable, and the person accepting and using it, thereby assumes all risk of accident and damage to person or baggage.
I accept the above conditions,
John Virgin
This Pass is not transferable, and the person accepting and using it thereby assumes all risk of accident and damage to person or baggage.
I accept the above conditions,

Annual free TP&W railroad passes – State Board of Ag

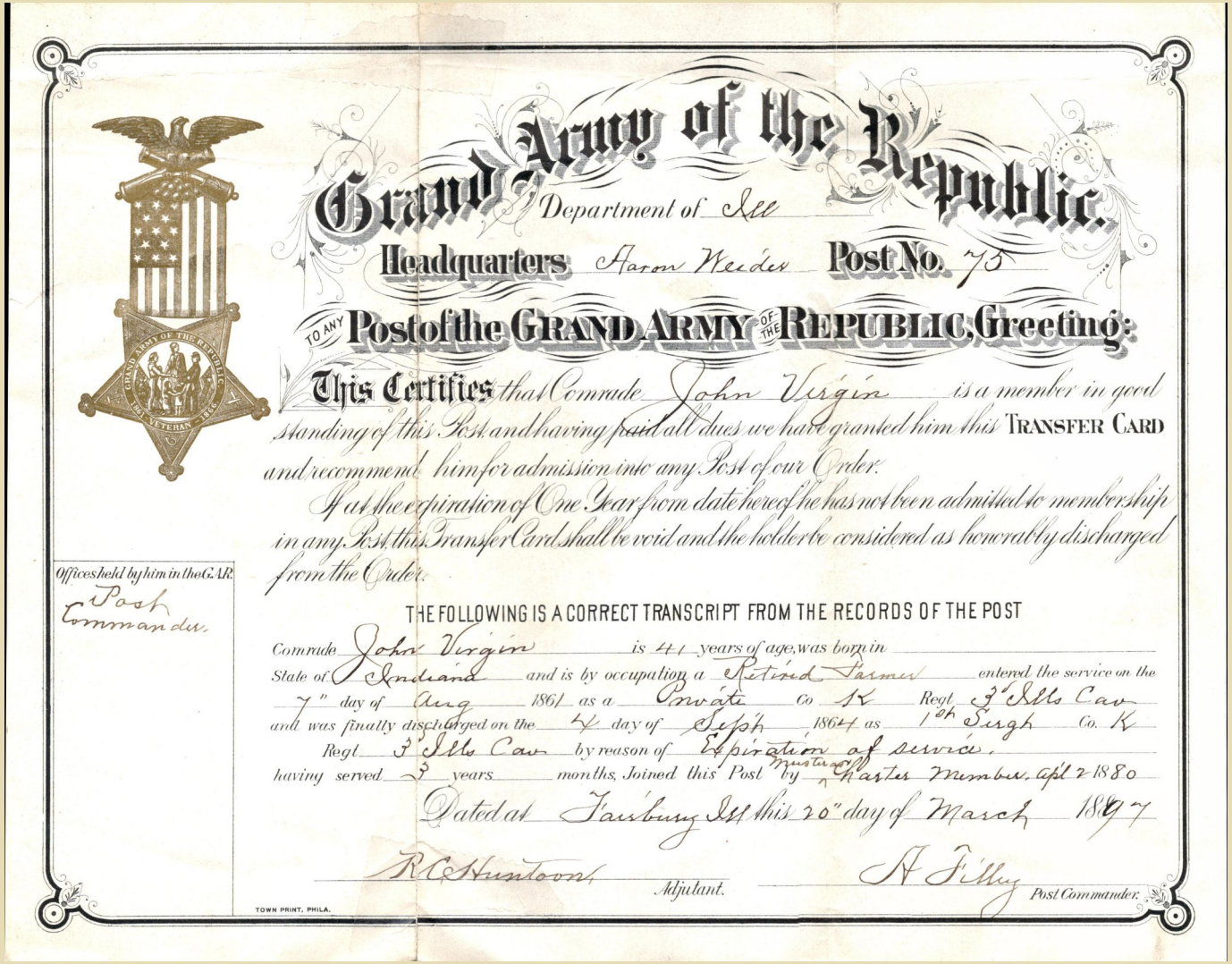
Rare Items Found in the Box




NOT TRANSFERABLE
GOOD AFTER AUGUST 1, 1893
Superintendent Department of Admissions.
THIS PASS GOOD ONLY FOR ONE DAILY ADMISSION;
HOLDER WILL OBTAIN PASS CHECK ON LEAVING
THE GROUNDS, TO RETURN.
AMERICAN BANK NOTE CO. N.Y.

Appointed by Governor to set up the Agricultural Exhibit

Rare Items Found in the Box



Grand Army of the Republic.

Department of Ill

Headquarters Aaron Wedes Post No. 75

TO ANY Post of the GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC, Greeting:

This Certifies that Comrade John Virgin is a member in good standing of this Post and having paid all dues we have granted him this TRANSFER CARD and recommend him for admission into any Post of our Order.

If at the expiration of One Year from date hereof he has not been admitted to membership in any Post this Transfer Card shall be void and the holder be considered as honorably discharged from the Order.

Offices held by him in the G.A.R.
Post Commander.

THE FOLLOWING IS A CORRECT TRANSCRIPT FROM THE RECORDS OF THE POST

Comrade John Virgin is 41 years of age, was born in
State of Indiana and is by occupation a Retired Farmer entered the service on the
7th day of Aug 1861 as a Private Co K Regt 3d Ills Cav
and was finally discharged on the 4 day of Sept 1864 as 1st Sergt Co. K
Regt 3d Ills Cav by reason of Expiration of service.
having served 3 years months, Joined this Post by Mustering Master Member Apl 2 1880

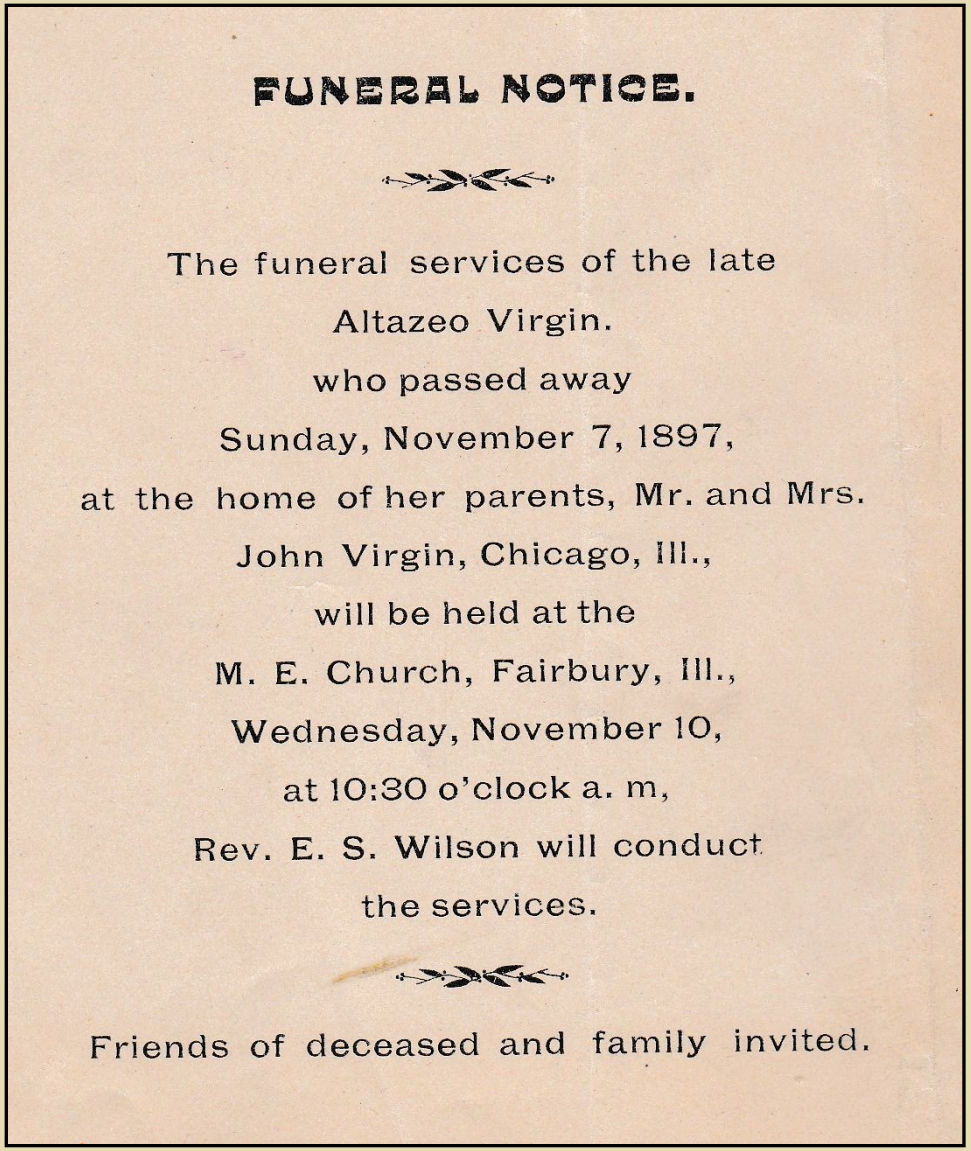
Dated at Danbury Ill this 20th day of March 1897

R C Huntoon Adjutant. A Filby Post Commander.

TOWN PRINT, PHILA.

One of early members of the GAR – 1897 Certificate

Rare Items Found in the Box



FUNERAL NOTICE.

The funeral services of the late
Altazeo Virgin.
who passed away
Sunday, November 7, 1897,
at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs.
John Virgin, Chicago, Ill.,
will be held at the
M. E. Church, Fairbury, Ill.,
Wednesday, November 10,
at 10:30 o'clock a. m,
Rev. E. S. Wilson will conduct
the services.

Friends of deceased and family invited.

Died at age 27

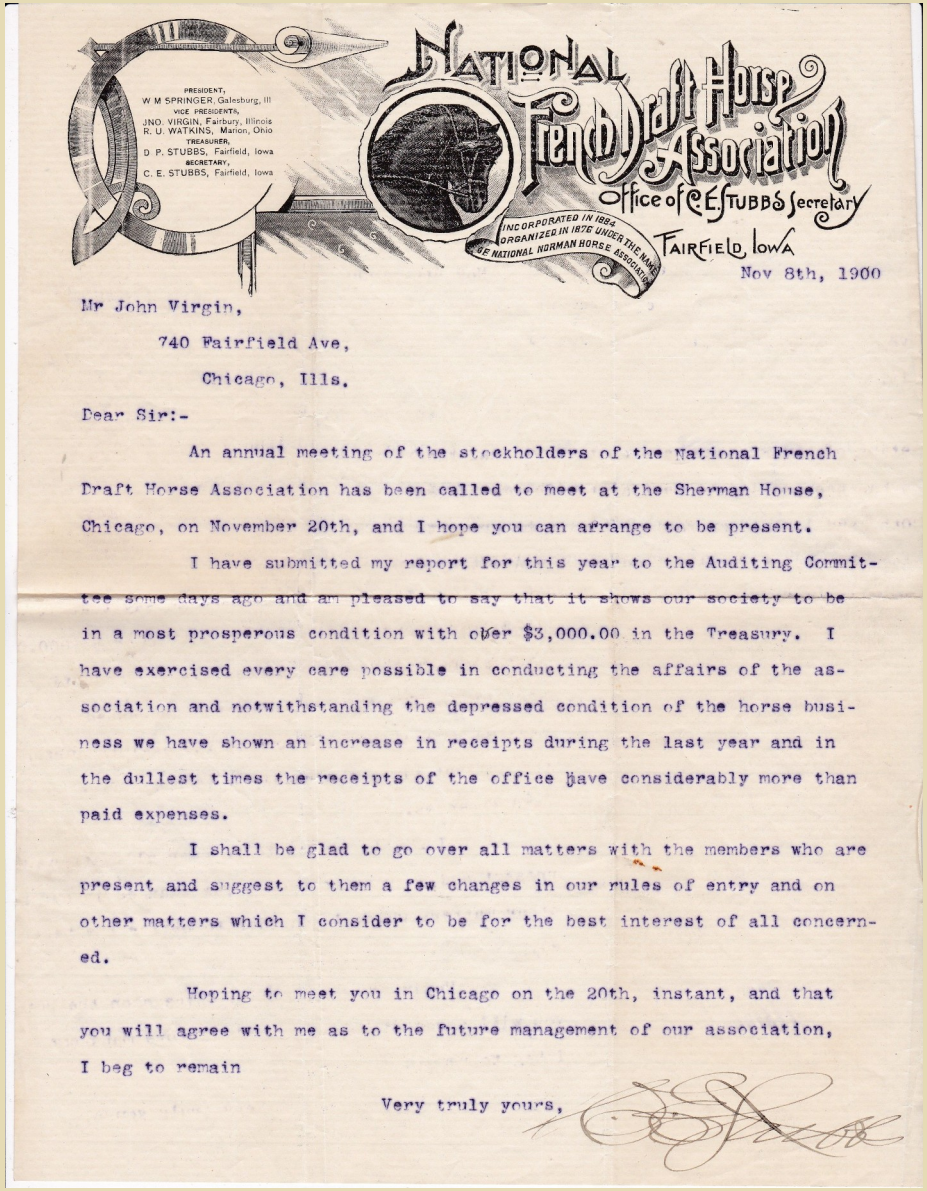
Rare Items Found in the Box

In summary, “tuberculosis of the bowels” described a fatal infection of the intestinal tract caused by TB, which produced long-term gastrointestinal symptoms and ultimately led to death due to complications like obstruction, hemorrhage, or widespread infection.

Rare Items Found in the Box

- John Virgin only got to enjoy 1 grandchild for about 3 years
- John Virgin Cooley
- John pushing his grandson in buggy while living in Chicago

Rare Items Found in the Box



PRESIDENT,
W M SPRINGER, Galesburg, Ill
VICE PRESIDENTS,
JNO. VIRGIN, Fairbury, Illinois
R. U. WATKINS, Marion, Ohio
TREASURER,
D P. STUBBS, Fairfield, Iowa
SECRETARY,
C. E. STUBBS, Fairfield, Iowa

National French Draft Horse Association

Office of C. E. STUBBS Secretary

INCORPORATED IN 1884.
ORGANIZED IN 1876 UNDER THE NAME OF NATIONAL NORMAN HORSE ASSOCIATION

FAIRFIELD, IOWA

Nov 8th, 1900

Mr John Virgin,

740 Fairfield Ave,

Chicago, Ills.

Dear Sir:-

An annual meeting of the stockholders of the National French Draft Horse Association has been called to meet at the Sherman House, Chicago, on November 20th, and I hope you can arrange to be present.

I have submitted my report for this year to the Auditing Committee some days ago and am pleased to say that it shows our society to be in a most prosperous condition with over $3,000.00 in the Treasury. I have exercised every care possible in conducting the affairs of the association and notwithstanding the depressed condition of the horse business we have shown an increase in receipts during the last year and in the dullest times the receipts of the office have considerably more than paid expenses.

I shall be glad to go over all matters with the members who are present and suggest to them a few changes in our rules of entry and on other matters which I consider to be for the best interest of all concerned.

Hoping to meet you in Chicago on the 20th, instant, and that you will agree with me as to the future management of our association, I beg to remain

Very truly yours,

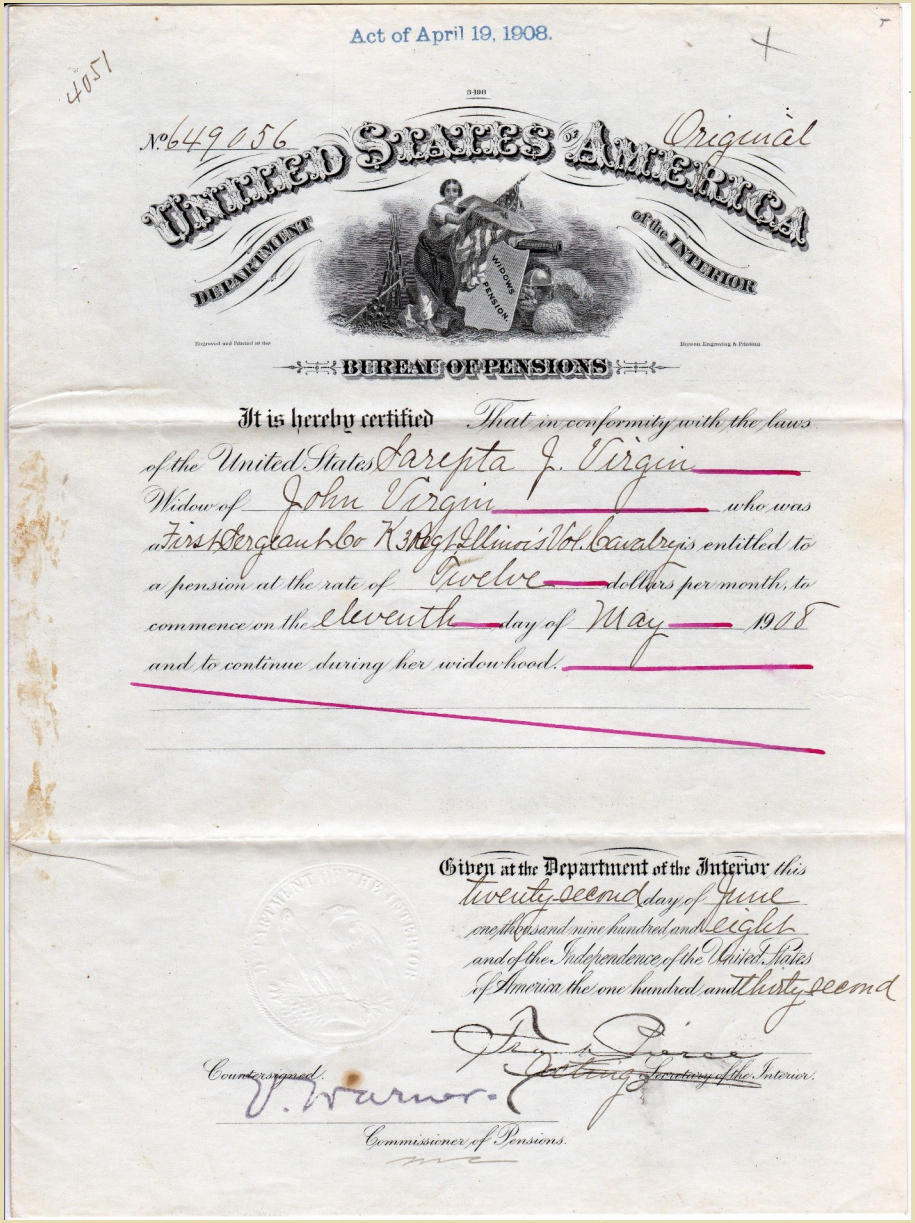
- Invitation to attend his last national Percheron horse convention
- He was VP
- He died at convention while attendees were voting him in for another term !!

Rare Items Found in the Box

John Virgin Cooley in 1905 when 7 years old.

Only Grandchild of John Virgin.

Rare Items Found in the Box



Act of April 19, 1908.

4051

No. 649056 Original

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

WIDOWS PENSION

BUREAU OF PENSIONS

It is hereby certified That in conformity with the laws of the United States Serepta J. Virgin Widow of John Virgin who was a First Sergeant Co K 39th Regt Illinois Vol. Cavalry is entitled to a pension at the rate of Twelve dollars per month, to commence on the eleventh day of May 1908 and to continue during her widowhood.

Given at the Department of the Interior this twenty-second day of June one thousand nine hundred and eight and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and thirty-second

Countersigned. J. Warner.

Commissioner of Pensions.

- In 1908 Congress passed new law granting pension to Civil War widows and soldiers death did not have to be caused by service.
- Serepta Virgin qualified because of John Virgin's service in the Civil War.
- $12/month equal to $414/month today

Rare Items Found in the Box

- Serepta Jane McDowell-Virgin circa 1930 at daughter's house in CA

- Dress likely made in 1910

Rare Items Found in the Box

Very pretty girl !!
Virginia ????

Rare Items Found in the Box

Closing Thoughts:

- John Virgin led a short, but very interesting life
- Prominent Early Fairbury businessman
- It is a miracle the box of family items was returned to Fairbury about 115 years after it left !!

Rare Items Found in the Box

Questions??